

Intermountain Ragtime By The Tribune Staff

The Husband Who Acted on Kipling's Advice.

By Louis Sherwin.

If your wife should go wrong with a comrade, be both To swing on my oath. Make him take her and keep her—there's hell for them both.

—Barrack Room Ballads.

With a bitter smile Marvyn Straker repeated these words to himself. Up and down Brigham street traffic was going on as usual; in fact, everything was acting just as if he were not confronted with the greatest disgrace that could come in the way of a married man. They did not care if he had to dig his nails into his hands to keep his rage and agony from escaping him—they did not know, thank God! They did not know!

How he loved her, even now when he hated her most! Yet he knew she was not so much to blame, he knew that that—laugh! Why were women always so much taken by those sickly ladies' men. He should be punished.

"God! to have that worm's throat in my hands! Every finger would find its mark to give him one tithe of the agony I feel. Fool! Can I suppose that he is capable of feeling the kind of agony I have? That miserable scum will find out what it costs to meddle with a strong man, a real man."

Marvyn Straker certainly was a strong man. With all his brilliance, his force and mentality had made themselves felt even as clearly as in his university days. He had been neither a pole nor a mere athletic animal; he was not the show man of the crowd on any occasion, but unobtrusively his strength was felt in both spheres. In the mines that same strength soon took him through the grades from a mucker to a machine man, and at a pluck he could have held a job with the monkey-wrench gang.

He had soon outgrown the viciousness of his "various days," but he had enough of it to know as much of both sides of the feminine character as it was good for him to know. He was never a schoolboy cynic, nor a glib fool; and for this reason it hurt his pride and self-love as much as his love for her when the calamity happened to him. He had loved her with the quiet intensity of his nature and with all his strength. And his hatred for the man who had taken all this away from him took root in the same way. His anger became deep, almost cold, and methodical. At first all the primitive instincts had been aroused in him and he thought of settling it in primitive ways. But when he recognized that his anger could be much better satisfied by more refined cruelty he gave up this idea.

"Maise! Maise!" he groaned to her in that one interview they had. "I thought that you were making me as near as it was possible for me to become the son my mother dreamed of. And now you've made me a man whom all will dread."

"Oh, heaven, what will be done?" she asked, as she shivered in her fear. Already she almost hated the radical cause of their tragedy. And she began to realize what she had thrown away, and for what.

In the meantime Richard Curtis had received a letter from Straker, asking him to call at his house in the evening. When he read it at his office he caught his breath almost involuntarily. The very plain wording of the note, which made no mention of any reason for Straker's request, made it more impressive. Curtis was a coward at heart, but his very vanity made his mental cowardice greater. He had a physical fear. Therefore his first impulse was to flight away before a home of being able to bluff the thing out, or even that his fear was groundless.

As Straker had known this, the scene in their dining-room that evening came out exactly as he had planned it. Curtis had entered, trembling, but with a careless polished air that was one of his few assets. Mrs. Straker, at her husband's request, had come down from her room, where she had spent the whole of the day.

"I've brought you together here to tell you what I have decided," said Straker.

His voice, always low and quiet, was a trifle dryer than usual. He was sitting down in a low armchair watching them both through clouds of smoke. He had managed to place them both so that the light shone on their faces, and the only sign of emotion on his own was a flicker in his eyelids and a closing of his thin lips.

"Decided?" exclaimed Curtis, feigning astonishment. "I am afraid you've got me, old man. What was there to decide?"

"Hell!" said Straker, "don't let's waste any time. Of course I've got you. If you insist on having it explained to you, why I know that my wife has done me the compliment to prefer your special type of manhood. Now, do you know?"

"Why, but I—my dear fellow—"

"Drop it. And, really, if you call me your 'dear fellow' any more I am liable to spoil my own plans by killing you on the spot. And I know you won't like the unpleasant scandal of that," he added, grimly.

"You insult your wife," hurled Curtis, feebly.

"There was a time when I would have considered it the damndest insult that could have been paid to her," said the other, dryly. His wife looked at him, appealingly.

"Now you have interrupted me sufficiently," he went on. "I am now going to tell you what I have decided. When I am done you may ask me any questions that are seemly. Stand up!" he exclaimed, as Curtis made a motion to take a seat. "Who are you, to sit down in my presence?"

"As you have decided that this person is preferable to your husband," continued Straker, addressing his wife, "you shall abide by your decision. You shall go to him and stay with him. He shall fill the place of your husband, and if you try to escape, as you may have no idea of doing at this early stage, I shall follow you and find you, wherever you may hide, and bring you back. I am not going to divorce you. I shall desert you and you must divorce me. You

will then marry the person you have chosen as being preferable to me. The proof of your guilt is in my possession. It remains hidden from your parents and your family as long as I see fit. If you ever run away, the first thing I shall do upon finding you will be to take you to them and show them what I have. And in the end you will be brought back to your punishment.

"You have heard what I have said?" he turned to Curtis. "And now I would remark to you that you will not find it a paying game to try to get out of your punishment. Before you are through you will have explained the consequences to your parents. You can then file a complaint for divorce and the case will go by default. You will then be married, and I think that you can trust both of you to work out your own salvation."

"Who are you to talk of breaking me?" blazed up the spark of manhood in Curtis.

"Your master," said Straker, quietly getting to his feet and standing by the door. "And not for one minute did Curtis try to meet his master's eyes. All three of them knew that Straker had told the exact truth. He was their master, and the others knew it, for their weakness corresponded to his strength."

"Now," said Straker, as he threw his coat over his arm and picked up a valise. "I am going away for two months. Don't attempt to leave Salt Lake, for I will explain the consequences to your parents. You can then file a complaint for divorce and the case will go by default. You will then be married, and I think that you can trust both of you to work out your own salvation."

They heard the front door bang as they were left alone with the memory of his words.

Had Marvyn Straker been an inmate of the Curtis household his indifference would have been satisfied within three months. At first they had taken up their life with an attempt to make the best of it. But she, with a woman's inveterate admiration for a strong man, had been so much taken by Marvyn Straker, had been so much taken by his strength and his pride and self-love as much as his love for her when the calamity happened to him. He had loved her with the quiet intensity of his nature and with all his strength. And his hatred for the man who had taken all this away from him took root in the same way. His anger became deep, almost cold, and methodical. At first all the primitive instincts had been aroused in him and he thought of settling it in primitive ways. But when he recognized that his anger could be much better satisfied by more refined cruelty he gave up this idea.

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Some of the Recollections of a Reformed Burglar

By Fred. R. Becholdt.

He was 60 years old and wore a long white beard when I met him. His hair was the color of driven snow. In fact he looked very much like the proverbial Santa Claus. He lacked only the technical terms of his former calling, for they are as legitimate in their own way as the technicalities of any profession.

"The porch climber of today is the smoothest burglar going. He gets the money. All the big hauls you read of now are made by him. He is the most scientific of his kind of grafters. The old-time night prowler is no longer the kind of thief he has superseded. He is little better than a tramp. People don't keep as much ready money on hand as they used to, and you have to know where to get it, and to work with some of the wiles of a thief."

"He is able to do it because people leave their houses exposed at dinner time, and they leave their dining-room curtains up so that everyone can see what is going on."

One night we were passing through the residence district of the busy city where we lived. The asphalt streets were deserted, save for a very occasional postman. Night was falling. Lights glowed out from windows, dining-room windows, as a rule, for it was the dinner hour. And beneath shades, raised some of them to their full height, and others just a few inches from the sill, we could catch glimpses of families seated about well laid tables. Cut glass sparkled on these boards, and the men and women who sat about them were all of them well groomed and very apparently blessed with the good things which come with wealth.

He walked for some blocks in silence. Then he paused before one particularly opulent appearing mansion, and, gradually, at first ramblingly, lapsed into reminiscence. He said:

"You take a chance for a porch climber. I encouraged him, judiciously, for I had learned from experience not to prod him to sharply. And he went on:

"The porch climber always works at this time of the evening. And look at the old lady's room and her daughter's rooms. The old woman has the big rocks and the daughter has the small ones. They begin to blow themselves on the girls. As to the young fellows, they ain't worth while bothering with. A tie pin or two is about the size of the stuff you'll find in their rooms."

"Now, to locate the particular apartments he wants your porch climber just waits till dinner time. He takes a walk up here just as we are walking. He takes a quiet place up and down the block. No one in sight. He slips into the yard—there isn't any fence to climb, even. He has an elegant chance to plant right in the shade of that clump of trees or behind that holly bush—see? Well, he waits till the family is in the house. One night all the family are in the house except one. He tells that by the empty place. Well, he looks around. Probably that one is dressing—they always get to dress for dinner in this part of the country. He waits till the lights are out. Next night it is, someone else, and next night or so, someone else further. Of course it doesn't go like that way. The thief has to plant out in that dark place night after night. He waits till the family is in the house, and then he uses a different plan to find the sleeping rooms. The old folks go to bed early. And he verifies what he found about their rooms during earlier seasons when he was in the house. The big world is a little like that. Perhaps quite a bit, the girls come along. As for the young fellows, they don't blow in till way along in the morning, maybe."

"So the porch climber pipes, and finally gets each room down pat. He knows where the old woman and the girls sleep and where they must, of course, go when they dress for dinner. He consequently knows where the scalps and diamonds must be lying in the house. He waits till the girls go to their hiding place and waits some dinner hour when the whole family are at the table. One by one the chairs flip up. When they are full it is just a case of turning the trick."

"Of course the trick isn't easy. But that is a matter of detail and experience. He has to make a quick sneak to the porch, when the street is clear. Then he goes up the post. On the roof he stoops low and opens the window. He is unobtrusive. Of course burglar alarms are rarely on at this time of the night. He goes through the old lady's room, and probably through those of the daughters. He takes his swag and slips down the post. All this takes a very few minutes."

"Probably it's an hour or two later before the tumble comes and the police are told. Meantime the crook is smoking his cigar in his room or talking in the theater again. And in a day or two he has expressed the stuff away to some good fence, who gives him at the most 50 cents on the dollar of its real worth. At that he is making a good thing, probably. But even porch climbing is getting very dangerous. Crooks don't get the show nowadays they used to. The graft is too hard. I think of that whenever I see a good chance and my fingers begin to itch."

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As False as Lovers' Vows-- Jack Dalton's Downfall.

By Edward Muscoe Garnett.

The agent of the dingy little station had just marked up on the bulletin "No. 2 four hours late," and in response to my impatient request for information as to the cause of the delay, said he "reckoned maybe they had turned off at the wrong forks," and, with an idiotic grin, retired to his cubbyhole.

It was a gloomy outlook prospect at best. A desert of alkali and sagebrush lay in unbroken miles on every side. Besides the water tank and station there were a few squalid shacks clustered together as if for company, and these sheltered the families of the half-dons that Pate and the railroad kept at Rocky Point.

It was growing dark fast and, after a long wait in the saddle, I was tired and ravenous. Visions of a luxurious Pullman and a well-cooked, well-served dinner, the delay of four hours and the last indefinitely only made matters worse. I was amusing myself inventing new and un-Christian adjectives and applying them with much vigor to railroads in general and this one in particular. The man who was coming to meet me was a tramp, but despite the dirt and grime, a week's beard and the slovenly gait, I knew that some time, somewhere, I had known him.

And then it came with a rush—Jack Dalton. The old college days back East. What did it mean? Jack, graduating with high honors at the head of his class, the beloved captain of the big eleven, stroke ear in the crew, the popular idol of a hundred athletic victories, that big-hearted, big-brained, soulful Jack Dalton a tramp? Impossible!

As these memories were leaping through my brain, I was rapidly retracing my steps. The man was just what I needed. The same massive shoulders, the same six feet of brawn and bone, surely I was not mistaken. Coming up with him I put my hand on his shoulder. He turned on me with a snarl and I saw his hand go to his house. Quickly I spoke his name, the old nickname of the class of '91.

He shrank back as if he had been struck in the face. Briefly I told him who I was and what I was doing there. He took a long look at me, and then he said: "You're the fellow who was in the delayed train. Then linking my arm in his and telling him to come with me. I got my traps together and we boarded the train. Reluctantly he went with me to the smoking apartment of the Pullman, and there far into the night and long after the other passengers were sleeping, he opened his heart to me, often choking up and sobbing like a child. Here's the story as he gave it to me that night. It can be told now.

Some months ago the poor fellow was taken out of a wreck dead, and he has no relatives alive that I know of. "It's not a long story, Jim, in the telling, but the living of it has seemed like an eternity. For two years I've been like you found me tonight—an outcast, a wanderer, a criminal. I was born and raised out here in this Western country. I love it and I came right back to it as soon as I graduated. You know in our senior year how we used to talk about the big world, how we were going into and the brave fight we were going to make to achieve something worth while. I was ambitious. I could hardly wait to get the reins in my hands. I wanted fame and influence with me. I had a lot of possibilities in me. That was all I wanted to live for. Father and mother were dead and there were no kink of that had any interest in me or I in them.

"Law and politics seemed the best field, and so I started in the Western town that had been my home to realize the dreams I had dreamed. Success came almost at once. People began to point me out. I was elected County Attorney and afterwards sent to the legislature. Congress was the goal I had set in the near future, and I knew it would be reached. And then, Jim, then the unexpected happened. Out of a clear sky, without warning, came the news that my father was dead. I was touched by the love of a woman. From the outset it was a passion, vibrant, insistent, stronger than I was. The old, old story that has been whispered since time began, but which I think had its source in the love of a man of Eternal Youth. To me it was something pulsing with life, new, fresh, unspoiled. I had never run the gamut of affection, and it made me bare my heart and soul to her. She had come to our town with her brothers, who had purchased and were publishing the local paper.

"We were engaged that winter. She was 19 then and we were to be married in a year. In the spring she went East to visit. I wrote to her daily and she came to me. I was then having a home built, a home for her. It was in July that she started home, stopping for some weeks in a city of the Middle West with relatives. It was from this time that her letters became less frequent and that she first began to mention some man who was paying her attention, entirely too much for safety. I should have known that I believed in her, Jim. I trusted her. God knows how true she was. "Finally she reached home. At once I felt a change. There was something like restraint toward me. I talked to her about it but she denied that there was any difference and said she loved me as much as always. We went over the plans of the new home together. At times she seemed like her old self, but I wasn't satisfied. The demon of jealousy had already crept in. She refused to tell me about the man she had written about, only to say that he had made it pleasant for her during her stay and that was all. One day I came in unannounced and found her reading a letter. We had our first quarrel. She acknowledged it was from him. I didn't know before that they were corresponding. I asked her to

promise me never to write to him again and she gave me her word. "It was a few days after this that she sent for me and told me that a girl whom I knew in X—where she had last visited was to be married and wanted her to be bridesmaid, and that she had decided to go the next day. Again my suspicions flamed into being but this time I didn't let her see it. In my mind there had rapidly formed a plan of action. I meant to confirm my fears or else set them at rest forever and beg her forgiveness.

"The next night she left